

Tavern Talk SUMMER 2006

Volume 1, Issue 1



YOU'VE WALKED THE WALK, NOW YOU CAN TALK THE TALK

Hewitt Family Revisits Childhood Home

The grandson and two great granddaughters of Frederick Hewitt recently visited Walker Tavern Historic Site and shared memories of the Hewitt Family home, now the site's Visitors Center. Ted Hewitt, who lives in Seattle, Washington, expressed disbelief when he saw the peonies growing in the backyard. "Those are original!" he said. They marked the border between the landscaped yard surrounding the home and the farm fields that stretched up the hill to the Walker Tavern. His sister raised chickens in the back yard and incubated the chicks in the storage room. Between the house and the barn/tavern area, Ted's aunt's home stood on what is now a grassy slope.

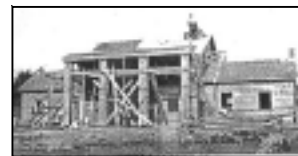


Hewitt family and friends picnicking on the front lawn of the Hewitt House/Visitors Center June 2006. From left to right - **Rachel Hewitt** - Great Granddaughter of Rev. Frederick Hewitt and **Trond Jacobsen**. **Frederick "Ted" Hewitt**, grandson of Frederick Hewitt, wife **Paula**. **Michael** and **Jennifer Hewitt**, great-granddaughter of Rev. Hewitt. **Lillis** and **Dick Gilmartin**, longtime family friends of the Hewitts.

Rev. Hewitt's son (Ted's father) designed the Hewitt House when he was in his early twenties. He was not formally trained as an architect and modeled the home after southern mansions he admired. The home had two fireplaces and four bathrooms. It also had a small servant's room off the kitchen (currently offices). The room was never utilized due to cutbacks following the Great Depression.

The Reverend Frederick Hewitt immigrated to Canada from England at age 16 and later moved to the Dearborn area. He became a minister and served at the church Henry Ford attended. They became friends and enjoyed going antiquing together. Rev. Hewitt purchased the Walker Tavern site in 1922 and maintained it as a tourist attraction from the early twenties to the fifties. He displayed his antique collection in the tavern and created rooms that supported some of the stories surrounding the site such as the Daniel Webster Room and the Murder Room. Rev. Hewitt operated antique stores in Florida, Chicago and Detroit, as well as the Brick Tavern.

Ted told us that he was the one who painted the word "ANTIQUES" on the large white barn by the Brick Walker Tavern where his family kept sheep and horses. He described Cambridge Junction at the time as bustling with homes, his uncle's Trading Post and other businesses. Rachael, Frederick's great granddaughter, currently works in Ann Arbor as a City Planner, and expressed excitement about continuing the family legacy of preserving the historic site. We thank the Hewitt family for a very special day.



Hewitt House under construction - 1927

Brass and Gas Club: Vintage Car Tour

Members of the Brass and Gas Club brought thirty-one vintage cars, predating 1912, to Walker Tavern on Thursday, May 18. This was just one stop on a four-day trip that recreated auto touring in the early days of improved roads when the Irish Hills was a scenic destination for thousands.



Photos: The above photos show Brass and Gas Club members arriving at Walker Tavern Historic Site. Top Right: Michigan Brass and Gas Club trip organizers, Jeanine and Glen Miller, and other visitors enjoy a role-playing activity, "Guess the Historic Traveler," with Site Historian, Cheryl Valentine.

UPCOMING EVENTS

JULY 15TH & 16TH

- CIVIL WAR WEEKEND

JULY 29TH & 30TH

- CLOSED FOR MIS INDY CAR RACE

AUGUST 2ND

- BIRTHDAY PARTY

AUGUST 4TH

- WEAVING WORKSHOP

AUGUST 9TH

- PACK YOUR WAGON

AUGUST 16TH

- LIFE ON THE FARM

AUGUST 19TH & 20TH

- CLOSED FOR MIS NASCAR RACE

AUGUST 23RD

- PIONEER TEA PARTY

SEPTEMBER 2ND

- WALKER FRONTIER FEST

THANKS TO THE FRIENDS AND VOLUNTEERS OF WALKER TAVERN

Dan Bahlau

Richard Evans

Debbie Howie

Tami Perras

Linda Reynolds

Don Watkins

Courtney Goldsmith

Lyle Andress

Hugh Drake

Don Sleek

OSB Community Bank

Foote Family

Medical Center

Swiss Swirl

Bob Phelps

Robert Cunningham

Merrill Evans

Bryan Howie

Shelby Holloway

Vey Valentine, II

Fern Watkins

Carol Dunn

Daniel Miller

Joyce Drake

Jim Roles

Mich. Brass & Gas

Bearclaw Coffee

Golden Nugget

Carolyn Phelps

Kelley Plummer

Leland Scott

Julienna Frost

Bruce Browne

Barbara Browne

Frank Bolak

Glen Dunn

Dilla Miller

Tami Averill

Barbara Wheeler

MIS

Curves

Oh These Irish Hills

BOY SCOUTS BUILD HERITAGE WALKWAY

Boy Scouts from the Great Sauk Trail Council came out for their District Spring Camporee on May 19th, 20th, and 21st. The event centered on the boys working for half the day building a brick pathway and having the other half of the day to do fun activities. Participants earned the Historical Trails patch. All the materials for the walkway were donated and most of the walkway was prepared before hand so that the boys could lay the brick down. The troops that participated were 313, 637, 632, 211, 8, 432, 424, 362, 272, Venture Crew 309, and Pack 637 Webelos.

As for the fun activities we had all sorts of "olde tyme" games set up – "Game of Graces," "Kick the Can," Hoops, Euchre, Checkers, Chess, Hatchet Throwing, Jacob's Ladder, Climbing Bear, Top, Dominoes, Yo-Yos, Cub-&-Ball, Limber Jack, Stilts, Bull Roarer, and Stereoscope. Other activities included rope making, "Guess the Historical Traveler," a scavenger hunt, and touring the site. The scouts themselves had a great time doing skits at their campfire on Saturday evening. They had their Order of the Arrow tap-out as well.



We thank Scout leader, Frank Bolak, and the following businesses that contributed to the project and made it all happen: Nava Stone, Yates Trucking, Comfort Enterprises, Karle Nursery, Smith's Nursery, Mitchell's Nursery, Hinkley Excavating, T-C'S Hardware, Chockaw-Kaul Distribution, Michigan International Speedway, The MILL, Marathon Oil Co. / J-J's Subway, Lenawee County Sheriff's Dept., Waterland Trucking, CVE Windows

RECIPE CORNER **Boil In A Bag Omelet:** We asked the Boy Scouts for their favorite cook-out recipe and they responded with this recipe for Boil in a Bag Omelets. Individual omelets are boiled in a pot over the open fire in zip-lock bags. Intrigued, we tried it at a family outing and it got unanimous raves. Need we say, this is not an historic recipe?
Recipe - Beat two eggs. Add favorite omelet ingredients. We tried: grated cheddar, onions, green peppers, pre-cooked Italian sausage, salt and pepper. Place omelet ingredients into a one-quart freezer bag and seal bag. Boil until eggs are set.

Walker Tavern Site Renovation to Begin Following Receipt of Major MDOT Grant

Walker Tavern Historic Site near Brooklyn has received a major grant from the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) for renovation of the Hewitt House, a 1920s residence on the property. Once renovated, the Hewitt House will serve as a Visitor Center for the US 12 Heritage Trail.

The renovated facility will provide visitors and travelers with an introduction to the history of US 12 (a National Heritage Trail), and to the history of Walker Tavern, and Michigan's transportation history as seen from the perspective of this important crossroads.

"We are pleased that our efforts to upgrade the Walker Tavern site will now be given a significant boost with the awarding of this grant funding," said Phil Kwiatkowski, director of the Michigan Historical Museum System.

"I cannot emphasize enough the importance of having this tourist attraction as an integral part of the Irish Hills," noted Linda Reynolds, Executive Director of the Brooklyn-Irish Hills Chamber of Commerce.

Interpretive exhibits at the renovated Hewitt House will engage visitors in actively learning about local history and about changes in travel (vehicles, road conditions, roadside attractions, and the travelers themselves) from the days Native Americans traveled by foot to today's motorized travel. It is expected that the renewed activity at Walker Tavern will increase cultural tourism in the area and provide local residents with a space to explore and appreciate their own heritage. Renovation work is slated to begin this fall with completion projected in 2007.

Walker On Wheels

Almost 400 people gathered at Walker Tavern Historic Site on Saturday, June 3rd for Walker On Wheels, a day that included a show of vintage cars, a Boy Scout Pinewood Derby Competition, and auto industry displays as well as festive food and games.

Walker On Wheels was sponsored by OSB Community Bank with offices in Brooklyn, Onsted, and Clark Lake.



Photos (Above Left) The Dancing DJs put on a splendid arrangement of music for the crowd. (Above Right) Scouts wait for the next heat to race down the track.

(Right) The 1940 Mercury Coup, owned by Stan and Karen Reynolds, winners of first place and the honor of being featured on the 2007 dash plaque for next year's show.



We're on the WEB!
Check us out at www.michigan.gov/walkertavern



Call for DONATIONS!

We need your help! Whenever we have an event there's all sorts of items we need – card tables, canopies, drinks, snacks, and random things for our activities. This could mean that we need cards for a Euchre tournament or maybe people to help run the event. Your time and efforts are a great value to us. Don't worry if you don't know something, we're happy to teach you so that you may help provide a quality experience for others. If you think you can help, PLEASE let us know! Thank you so much.

Want to DONATE a historical artifact?

Please Contact: Michigan Historical Museum
Collections Unit
702 West Kalamazoo Street
Lansing, MI 48909

The Friends of Michigan History Walker Tavern Chapter

If you know of anyone who would like to join, please let us know! Contact Cheryl Valentine to send them the brochure they need to fill out to become a FRIEND just like you!

Remember, FRIENDS benefits include a subscription to the Friends Insider newsletter, our own *Tavern Talk*, and the knowledge that they are contributing to keeping history alive!

A SPECIAL THANKS to our volunteer Master Gardener Students from Hidden Lake Gardens
Claudia Miller, Larry Kanitz, & David Holt.

Be sure and take a look at our new herb and container gardens.

Comments? Questions? Thoughts?

Contact Cheryl Valentine

Want to help with our next issue of *Tavern Talk*?

E-Mail Newsletter Editor:

Geoffrey Bolak

geoffreybolak@hotmail.com

Walker Tavern Historic Site

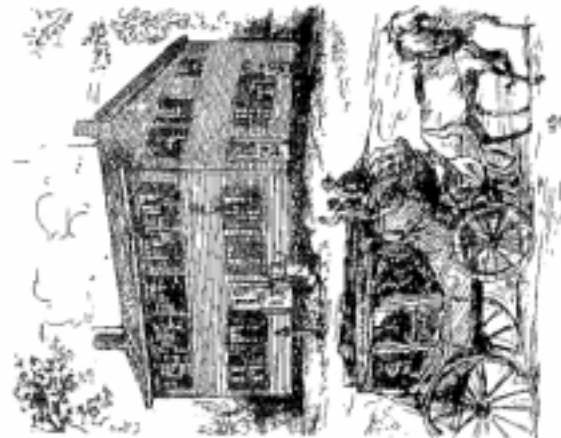


Tavern Talk

WHAT IS THERE TO KNOW ABOUT WALKER TAVERN?

From stagecoaches to automobiles, Walker Tavern stands at the crossroads of travel history. What was it like to travel by stagecoach from Detroit to Chicago in the 1840s? What attracted tourists to the Irish Hills in the 1920s? Why did Walker Tavern change from a stagecoach stop to a farm, and then become an automobile-touring destination? Who stopped at this crossroads and why were they important to the history of tourism and travel in Michigan? Native Americans, explorers, surveyors, road builders, settlers, land speculators, politicians, preachers, runaway slaves, artists, musicians, writers, bootleggers, bandits, and flappers are among the colorful array of people who have passed by this crossroads. They traveled by foot, by wagon, on horseback and by automobile.

Visit Walker Tavern Historic Site at the intersection of US 12 and M-50 and “experience” travel then and now. Climb aboard a stagecoach and imagine riding by stage twelve hours over rutted dirt roads. Come into the tavern where weary travelers rested from their journey. Read first-hand accounts of Walker Tavern during the first half of the 20th century when popular stories about celebrity visits and murdered strangers enticed motorists from Detroit and other urban centers to this popular roadside attraction. Picnic, hike and relax at Walker Tavern where history hits the road.



HELLO FRIENDS! You have just received the first of many Walker Tavern Newsletters. This newsletter includes information regarding a brief history of Walker Tavern as well as news about current events. This means we'll be telling you about what's happened this year, what's going on, and what's coming up soon!

Feel free to volunteer to help at upcoming events! Don't hesitate to be a part of the action here at Walker Tavern. We can always use a little help from our friends.

Contact Information
Walker Tavern Historic site
13220 M-50
Brooklyn, MI 49230
PH: (517) 467-4401 FAX: (517) 467-4414
valentinec@michigan.gov

Tavern Talk is a publication of Walker Tavern Historic Site. Walker Tavern is one of eleven museums and historic sites that form the Michigan Historical Museum System under the Michigan Department of History, Arts, and Libraries.

Walker Tavern Historic Site
13220 M-50
Brooklyn, MI 49230

Postage
Goes
Here